

cal gaming machine, which contains symbol images unalterably printed on a reel strip. Unlike the more traditional and less dramatic effects previously described with respect to FIGS. 5 and 6, these effects are likely to contradict the perception of an actual mechanical reel stepper machine. This is a trade-off, available to game designers, is made possible by the highly adaptable nature of the digital video simulation and visual value of these video changes.

**[0111]** In another specific example, the gaming machine generates a game image on a distal video display device and a flashing translucent image on a proximate video display device. The game could for example, be reels or one or more wheels, and a flashing image on the proximate display could be a translucent line that indicates the payline(s) on the reels. Since some games permit multiple paylines based on the person's wager, this permits the game to show multiple paylines responsive to the person's actions. Alternatively, the proximate video display device may show a symbol or message that provides a player with helpful information such as a hint for playing the game.

**[0112]** In one embodiment, the gaming machine presents different game types on the layered display devices. For example, the distal and backmost display device may output a main game with reels 125 while a proximate video display device shows a bonus game or progressive game. The bonus game or progressive game may result from playing the main game.

**[0113]** The layered video display devices provide other potential benefits. For example, their digital nature permits external loading and changing of games and graphics. This permits a casino or gaming establishment to change video on each of the layered display devices without physically altering the gaming machine or requiring maintenance. Thus, the number of virtual slot reels may be changed from 3 to 5 to 9, or some other number. In this case, the intermediate and distal video display devices change the position of their transparent window portions 15 for viewing of the different number of virtual slot reels. Symbols on each virtual slot reel 125 may also be changed. Also, a pay table shown on display device 18a may be changed, in addition to changing whether a bonus or progressive game is shown on the distal video display device. This permits the same gaming machine to play new games simply by downloading a data onto the machine. For a mechanical machine, this game change traditionally required manual and mechanical reconfiguration of a gaming machine, e.g., to change the number of reels for new reel game that requires five reels instead of three.

**[0114]** In one embodiment, the layered video display devices are all-digital and permit reconfiguration in real time. This permits new or different games to be downloaded onto a gaming machine, and reconfiguration of the three display devices to present a new or different game using any combination of the display devices. Game aspects changed in this manner may include: reel symbols, the paytable, the game theme, wager denominations, glass plate video data, reel strips, etc. For a casino, or other gaming establishment, this permits a single gaming machine to offer multiple games without the need for gaming machine maintenance or replacement when a new game is desired by casino management or customer demand. On one day, the gaming machine may offer games using all the layered display devices. The next day, the same gaming machine may offer a game that only uses an outer LCD panel and touchscreen, where the distal displays are set to their fully transmissive mode (when

a single backlighting system is employed) or, with other display lighting schemes, where a shutter (or other technology on front display) blocks out the back display devices. Some other subset of the layered displays may also be used. This permits dual-dynamic display device reconfiguration and/or game reconfiguration, at will, by downloading commands to the gaming machine that determine a) what game(s) is played, and b) what display device(s) is used. For example, this allows the same gaming machine to run a reel game one day and a video poker game another day that uses some subset of the display devices.

**[0115]** This reconfiguration of display devices used and games also enables new uses for gaming machines. Traditionally, a casino or other gaming establishment purchased a gaming machine and offered games only according to its display capabilities. If a casino purchased 250 gaming machines that only had LCD panels, and then later decided they wanted to implement reel games or other games that required more than an LCD panel, they were forced to purchase new gaming machines. Gaming machine 10, however, solves this problem for a casino. Accordingly, gaming machines as described herein permit a gaming establishment to switch the number of display devices used by a gaming machine to display a game.

**[0116]** One business advantage of this dual-dynamic display device reconfiguration and/or game reconfiguration is navigating gaming regulations imposed by different jurisdictions, which often change over time. First, each jurisdiction imposes its own set of rules on what games are locally permissible. Second, gaming regulators in each jurisdiction often change the local rules. This is particularly common for new gaming regulators and jurisdictions allowing casinos for the first time. The new gaming regulators may only permit class 2 games at first (e.g., bingo) and later permit class 3 games (video poker and reel games, one year later). Gaming machine 10 allows a casino in this jurisdiction to adapt, instantly, to a regulations change with a) new games and b) new display device arrangements that were already on gaming machine 10 but not previously used. Thus, when some jurisdictions limit the number and types of games that can be played, gaming machines described herein allow a casino to switch games—on the fly without significant gaming machine maintenance or downtime in the casino—when jurisdiction rules change.

**[0117]** Additionally, the enhanced utility and regulatory acceptance of a viable stepper simulation using video in lieu of mechanical reels permits mechanical-simulated games in new environments. Some jurisdictions do not permit the use of actual mechanical reel machines but do allow all forms of video-based gaming machines, which permits embodiments described herein to service mechanical reel customers in these jurisdictions.

**[0118]** One of the display devices in a layered arrangement may also output live video such as television or a movie (or parts of either). For example, the television or movie video may be output on a rear display while a game is played on a proximate display. This permits a person to watch television or a movie while playing a game at a gaming machine, without changing position or line of sight to switch between the game and live video. The live video may also be related to the game being played to enhance enjoyment of that game, e.g., a science fiction movie related to a science fiction game being played or a 1960's television show related to a 1960's television game. The video may also play commercials and pro-